

ANTHROPOLOGY AT UHMANOA: SOME HISTORICAL FOOTNOTES

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Note: The following could not have been written without the help of Stuart Dawrs and Dore Minatodoni of Hamilton Special Collections. They went far above and beyond the call of duty to make available printed material from UH catalogs.

The 75th anniversary of anthropology at UHM is dated from the appointment in 1934 of Felix Keesing as professor of cultural anthropology, offering courses including Peoples of the Pacific. As Mike Pietrusewsky noted in his discussion, physical anthropology began earlier, drawing on outside funding and resources of Bishop Museum. Bishop Museum continued to provide teaching. In 1937-8, courses were offered by Keesing, Harry Shapiro, Peter Buck and Ernest Beaglehole. Edwin G. Burrows, a Bishop Research Fellow, was also listed as a faculty member.

In September 1937, Anthropology and Sociology Departments were combined. In 1938-39, Sociology faculty included Romanzo Adams and Andrew Lind; Ellsworth Faris was a visitor. Anthropology comprised Keesing, Buck and John Embree as Research Associate. John Reinecke, who had received a Ph.D. from Yale in 1937, was listed as an Instructor in the combined departments. Reinecke later achieved considerable notoriety for his radical stances; he was indicted under the Smith Act as a Communist but was later acquitted.

The catalog for 1938-39 notes enrollment at UHM totaled 2188 undergraduates, 512 graduate students. Graduate faculty in Anthropology/Sociology included Keesing, Embree and Gordon Bowles in the former, Lind and Bernard Hormann in the latter. The MA degree was offered in both. The 1940-41 catalog lists Keesing as Professor, Lind as Associate Professor, Embree and Bowles as Assistant Professors, Hormann as Instructor, and Buck and Kenneth Emory as Lecturers.

The Second World War dealt anthropology a severe blow. The 1942-43 catalog lists Keesing and Bowles as "Absent in Military/Resigned". No anthropology faculty at all appear in the 1943-44 catalog and this continued until 1946. However in the 1945-46 catalog, Hormann offered "Introduction to the Study of Man" and John Rademaker taught "Peoples of the Pacific" and "Peoples of Asia". Worth noting is that Keesing published "The South Seas in the Modern World" in 1941, and the same year Embree published his research on Japanese in Kona as AAA Memoir #50.

In 1946, anthropology returned to life. Katherine Luomala joined the department as an assistant professor; her Ph.D. was from University of California at Berkeley. She joined Embree and taught more topical courses, e.g., religion. Emory, who had received his Ph.D. from Yale in 1946 and who retained his status at Bishop Museum, continued to teach "Peoples of the Pacific".

The catalog for 1947-48 clearly established anthropology as an undergraduate major. Leonard Mason was appointed as an associate professor, though Luomala with her Ph.D. in hand remained an assistant professor. (Another footnote for those interested in the

plight of women in academia: male faculty were listed by their last names, Luomala appears in these earlier catalogs as “Miss [not Dr.] Luomala”.) Mason teaches the introductory course and “Primitive Society”; Luomala courses on religion, art and folklore.

According to the catalog for 1948-49, Luomala is now an associate professor. Emory, listed as a lecturer, teaches “Hawaiian Culture” and “Peoples of the Pacific”. Mason adds “Micronesia in the Modern World” and “Culture Conflict in Pacific Dependencies” to his course list. Those interested in Mason’s career are referred to Robert C. Kiste and Mac Marshall, “American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment”, UH Press 1999. Luomala now teaches courses about peoples of South and North Asia, and the American Indian [sic].

Two new appointments were made in 1949. Saul H. Riesenbergr joined the faculty as an instructor; he was to receive his Ph.D. from the University of California. Samuel H. Elbert was appointed as an assistant professor of Pacific Languages, teaching elementary Hawaiian and all three courses listed under “Linguistics”. In his “Survey of Pacific Languages” he developed the first lexicostatistical study of Polynesian languages, published in the Southwestern Journal of Anthropology in 1953.

To shift to the personal: I became an MA student in the UHM department in February 1951, having received my BA from UC-Berkeley. Anthropology students both undergraduate and graduate were few in number and we all knew each other, though differences in age and experience were also noteworthy. Most graduate students were veterans of the Second World War; I was not. William Bonk who was to teach at UH-Hilo until his retirement was among them. Richard Howell and Benjamin Wallacker had preceded me at Berkeley and although I knew them by sight, I did not meet them until we found ourselves at UHM. After a varied career, Howell also ended up at UH-Hilo.

Three undergraduates were later to receive Ph.D. degrees from Yale and two would eventually teach at UHM. William Davenport was the most colorful in many ways. He had become a merchant seaman in his teens and sailed through the Pacific during WWII. UHM offered few undergraduate scholarships to non-athletes in those days, and Davenport won the most prestigious (albeit modest in monetary terms) for three consecutive years. Thomas Maretzki’s wartime experience as a Jew was fraught with danger. Readers may consult Geoff White’s obituary as to his UHM career where he eventually served as department chair until shifting to the medical faculty. The youngest of the three, with no wartime experience at all, was David Eyde. Eyde taught at several other universities before joining the UHM faculty; he eventually ended his career at University of Texas at El Paso.